Pending FDI cases in FIPB

1802. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 200 foreign direct investment cases are pending in FIPB for approval; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken or proposed to be taken for speedy approval of these cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) and (b) The pendency position in respect of FDI proposals varies on a daily basis, as receipt and disposal of FIPB applications is a continuous process. Government has put in place a transparent and time-bound approval mechanism for dealing with proposals involving Foreign Direct Investment. Under this mechanism, information at all stages of the application is available on the department's website *viz.* www.dipp.nic.in.The agenda for the weekly meetings of the FIPB held on Thursdays are posted on the website by preceding Monday of the week. All applications registered before Wednesday of a week, if complete in every respect, are listed for the meeting of the FIPB on Thursday of the following week. The cases approved by the Board are also posted on the website. Government's decision on proposals before the Board is normally communicated within six weeks. The date of despatch of letters is also available on the website.

Quota for production of tobacco in Karnataka

1803. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the land in hectares under cultivation of tobacco in Karnataka during the year 2001;

(b) the quantity of tobacco grown during 2001 in Karnataka;

(c) whether it has come to the notice of Government that theTabacco Board has asked the growers to grow only 48 million kgs. of tobacco during the year 2001;

(d) if so, the reasons for reducing 10 million kgs. of tobacco being grown in Karnataka; and

(e) whether Government would take steps to fix the quota of tobacco being grown in Karnataka to 60 million kgs. during the year 2002-03?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) Over 47,500 hectares was cultivated under Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco during 2001 -02 crops season.

(b) Around 58 million kgs. of FCV tobacco was marketed during 2001 -02 seasons.

(c) to (e) The Production Committee of theTabacco Board had initially fixed the crop size at 42.08 million kgs. The Board has since increased the same to 50 million kgs. in response to the changed market situation.

Crises in tea industry

1804. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government have taken to solve the serious crises in the tea industry arising out of the fall in the price of tea;

(b) whether Government intended to reduce excise duty;

(c) whether Government would stop the import of tea and increase the import duty on tea to 300 per cent;

(d) whether Government would declare a moratorium for the loans taken by the tea cultivators, other than big plantation companies; and

(e) whether Government propose to write off loans upto Rs. 50,000 taken by the tea cultivators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) As the present crises in the tea plantation industry is on account of unremunerative price for tea, Government of India have taken a number of steps to help the tea industry, which include the following:—

- Excise duty on tea has been reduced from Rs. 2 per kg. to Rs. 1 per kg. in the Budget 2002-03.
- The allowance under Section 33 AB of Income Tax Act has been increased from 20% to 40 % in the Budget 2001 -02.